

# **'Patients should not be lost in our overly complex health system', says Private Cancer Physicians of Australia**



**In a historic commitment to bolstering cancer nursing services, The Federal Government is marking the largest investment in cancer care on record. With a vision to provide comprehensive support for patients navigating the complexities of the healthcare system, the government has entrusted the McGrath Foundation with the implementation of this program.**

The unveiling of the \$166 million Australian Cancer Nursing and Navigation Program stands as a pivotal moment in healthcare, elevating the total investment from

the 2023-24 Budget to an astounding \$735.7 million. This initiative aims to address the multifaceted needs of individuals grappling with a cancer diagnosis, ensuring they receive tailored care and support throughout their arduous journey.

Expressing support at this pivotal move, Private Cancer Physicians of Australia (PCPA) hailed the government's commitment as a culmination of tireless advocacy efforts.

"PCPA's advocacy for our patients, with Rare Cancers Australia, has finally paid off! Our patients are the most vulnerable and should not be allowed to be lost in our overly complex and confusing (private and public) health system," the organisation said.

Commenting on the transformative impact of the Australian Cancer Plan, Professor Dorothy Keefe, CEO of Cancer Australia, articulated the essence of the plan, highlighting the need for equitable access to world-class cancer care regardless of cancer type or geographical location.

"At the moment we don't have that. What we have is differences due to which cancer you have, and differences in outcomes due to which community you belong to and where you live. So, we asked everyone affected by cancer in Australia, and all of the sector workers and charities, to tell us what they needed in an Australian Cancer Plan. What they told us was they wanted their cancers detected

as early as possible, they wanted the world's best treatment underpinned by excellence in research and good data, and they wanted to be cared for in the whole cancer journey," she said.

This unprecedented investment is poised to enhance cancer outcomes across Australia, spanning prevention, early detection, treatment, recovery, survivorship, and end-of-life care. With an aim to support the one million Australians currently living with or having survived cancer, as well as those diagnosed in the future, the Australian Cancer Nursing and Navigation Program promises inclusive and high-quality care for all.

Key components of this ambitious initiative include the allocation of funds to recruit 100 new all cancer care nurses under the aegis of the McGrath Foundation. These nurses, supplementing the existing cohort, will ensure comprehensive support for individuals battling various forms of cancer by 2027.

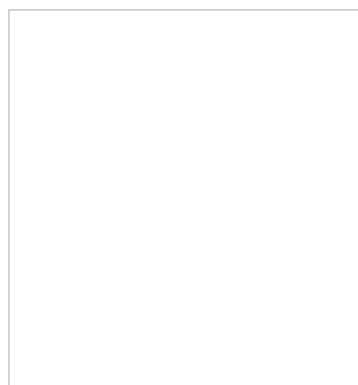
The program also earmarks substantial funds for prostate cancer nurses, a Cancer Navigation Service spearheaded by Cancer Council Australia, telehealth support services tailored to cancer patients' unique needs, and continued support for child and youth cancer initiatives led by Canteen.

The Hon Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health and Aged Care, underscored the significance of this historic

investment, affirming "We're very confident that the record investment we're providing here – a two thirds increase in the number of Commonwealth funded nurses – as well as all of those additional programs will be quite a game changer in the level of support given to Australians living with cancer, having dealt with a diagnosis right through their journey."

This commitment augments the government's ongoing efforts, including the allocation of \$48.2 million to implement the National Strategy for the Elimination of Cervical Cancer in Australia. Moreover, these measures complement the establishment of a National Lung Cancer Screening Program and support for First Nations people's cancer care needs through Aboriginal and Community Controlled Health Organisations.

In aggregate, the Commonwealth's investment in enhancing cancer outcomes is poised to reach nearly \$2.5 billion over the next four years, excluding the cost of Medicare services and pharmaceuticals.



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